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Maine Court Reissues Scam Warning

July 20, 2015, Portland, Maine. Last year, the Maine Judicial Branch received reports from Maine residents who had been “spoofed.” Caller ID spoofing happens when a scammer has the ability to show a fraudulent caller ID number, and thus make it appear as though the recipient is receiving a call from the court system or a police or sheriff’s office. In the past, Maine courts received several reports from people that they received a phone call telling them that they had missed a court date or a fine payment, or that a warrant would be issued because they failed to attend jury service. The recipient is told that they can pay the fine over the phone to avoid arrest. They are then asked to provide personal and financial information.

Recently, Maine courts have received reports that incidents of spoofing are again occurring in Maine. The telephone number that is appearing on the recipient's caller ID may actually appear as a Maine courthouse or sheriff department telephone number. Incidents have occurred in Aroostook, Cumberland and Franklin Counties but can occur anywhere in the State.

Mary Ann Lynch, spokesperson for the Judicial Branch said: “The Maine Judicial Branch wants to remind Maine people that the courts’ collection practices do not include telephone or email contact, and that no one working for Maine courts or the sheriff’s department will request credit card, social security numbers, or other personal information either over the telephone or by email. Nor will they appear at your home looking for money. If someone does owe a court or traffic violation fine, they may receive a U.S. Postal Service letter, an arrest warrant may be issued, or their tax refund will be reduced by the amount of the debt owed to the state. They will not, however, receive a phone call or an email, nor will they even be asked for money at their home. People should not give personal information over the telephone or by email, and if they have a question about the authenticity of the request, they should call the local courthouse and speak to the court clerk and, of course, notify local law enforcement.”

Payments for traffic tickets can be made on line at: <http://www.informe.org/cgi-bin/paytixx/paytixx.pl> and payments for court fines can be made on line at: <https://www5.informe.org/online/courts/fines/>. Payments can also be made at the courthouse where the fine was ordered.

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